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ABSTRACT

Holdings of the National Center for Higher Education Management Systems (NCHEMS) and fiscal year (FY) 1985 data acquisitions and software enhancements are discussed. NCHEMS currently hold many years of data from surveys conducted by the National Center for Education Statistics, the National Science Foundation, the Bureau of the Census, the National Longitudinal Survey of the High School Class of 1972, the National Longitudinal Survey of Labor Market Experience, and the Cooperative Institutional Research Program. To ensure currency of its data holdings, NCHEMS continually updates its existing holdings with new data as they are released. Data sets that were acquired in FY 1985 are listed, as well as miscellaneous pieces of data that have been acquired for producing the "Higher Education Financing in the Fifty States" document. NCHEMS has also built a base of standardized software to facilitate accessing, updating, and manipulating data from its comprehensive collection of higher education data. In 1984 it was determined that existing software should only be minimally enhanced until a decision was made to obtain a new computer or to implement a new approach to storage of NCHEMS data collection. (SW)

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NCHEMS Data Acquisitions and Software Enhancements FY85

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National Center for Higher Education Management Systems

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Data Acquisitions

Over the past several years, NCHEMS has acquired and centralized what may be the most comprehensive collection of data about higher education in this country. This centralized repository, where diverse sets of data are compiled and where expertise is concentrated, contributes to the efficiency and efficacy of data use. It provides access to a wide variety of users who otherwise would be denied access by virtue of a lack of resources to acquire the data and perform the analyses. Much effort has been invested in making the data readily accessible to fill a variety of research and information needs.

Current holdings include eleven or more years of data from the nine full sample surveys collected by the National Center for Education Statistics (NCES) via the Higher Education General Information Surveys (HEGIS); ten years from the National Science Foundation's University Science Statistics Program; seven years of selected items from the October Current Population Survey conducted by the Bureau of the Census; four years of the National Longitudinal Survey of the High School Class of 1972; eight to ten years of the National Longitudinal Survey of Labor Market Experience; seven years from the Cooperative Institutional Research Program; and a variety of other data. These other data are derived from surveys such as High School and Beyond, from specialized programs such as those operated by The College Board and the Campus-Based Student Financial Aid Programs, and from other researchers.

NCHEMS data were originally obtained to support the Center's internal research activities on higher education management. In particular, the data resources supported extensive efforts on higher education indicators (in areas such as financing, student aid, and tuition), and a variety of cost studies. The data

have also provided an empirical basis for research on higher education management in other recent projects at NCHEMS. During the past year, for example, the data resources supported extensive efforts in peer-group analysis and NCHEMS Information Services in the Information for Management Project. The data are also used extensively in producing the Higher Education Financing in the Fifty States document. During the same period, other projects such as Higher Education Costs and Organizational Studies have used the NCHEMS data resources

To ensure the currency of its data holdings, NCHEMS continually updates its existing holdings with new data as they are released. The data acquisition activity involves determining the research needs of NCHEMS projects and a regular monitoring of general higher education and statistical publications, as well as release announcements distributed by the various data collection sources. In addition, NCHEMS staff maintain close ties with major governmental agencies and national associations involved with higher education.

This year NCHEMS did not acquire as many data sets as in previous years. The reason is that the National Center for Education Statistics (NCES), NCHEMS primary source of data, did not make available some of the data sets that are normally produced and the data were not available through any other sources. A listing of the data sets acquired by NCHEMS in FY85 to update its data holdings are provided in table 1.

In addition to the data sets listed in table 1, miscellaneous pieces of data are utilized in the production of Higher Education Financing in the Fifty States that have not been included in table 1 since they are of a different nature: the listings in table 1 are of complete data sets, whereas the data used to produce the finance document are miscellaneous pieces of data that have

been combined to produce a unique data set. These data are presented in table 2.

Table 1

NCHEMS Data Sets Acquired in FY84

Data	Source
HEGIS 18 Degrees and Other Formal Awards Conferred Between July 1, 1982 and June 30, 1983	NCES
HEGIS 18 Fall Enrollment and Compliance Report of Institutions of Higher Education, 1983	NCES
HEGIS 18 Financial Statistics of Higher Education for Fiscal Year Ending 1983	NCES
HEGIS 19 Institutional Characteristics of Colleges and Universities, 1984-85	NCES
HEP 1985 Higher Education Directory data base	HEP

Sources: NCES - National Center for Education Statistics
HEP - Higher Education Publications, Inc.

Table 2

Miscellaneous Data Acquired for Higher Education Financing in the Fifty States*

Data	Source
Expenditures for higher education not reported by institutions (for example, operating expenses for postsecondary education coodinating boards)	State Higher Education Finance Officers "Survey of Selected State Funding for Postsecondary Education"
High School Graduates, 1982	Unpublished data, NCES, Washington, D.C.
Population by State, 1982	U.S. Bureau of the Census, "Estimates of the Population of States, by Age: July 1, 1981 to 1983." In Current Population Reports, May 1984.
Student Aid data, FY83	State Higher Education Finance Officers "Survey of Selected State Funding for Postsecondary Education"
State and Local Direct General Expenditures by Function (for example, higher education, elementary/secondary, public service)	U.S. Bureau of the Census, Governmental Finances in 1982-83, Series GF83, no. 5, U.S. Government Priting Office, Washington, D.C., October 1984.
State and Local Tax Capacity, Effort, and Revenues by Categories, 1982 Preliminary	Advisory Commission on on Intergovernmental Relations. 1982 Tax Capacity of the Fifty States. Washington, D.C.: ACIR, forthcoming.

* These data are received in a hard-copy format and are manually entered into a file to be used for this document.

Software Enhancements

Over the past several years NCHEMS has built a base of standardized software to facilitate accessing, updating, subsetting, aggregating, matching, and manipulating data from its comprehensive collection of higher education data. In a constant effort to upgrade and enhance this software, NCHEMS has regularly installed enhancements of externally purchased programs (for example, SPSS, QUIZ, and so on). In addition, efforts have been made to enhance in-house developed programs, as appropriate, and to develop new programs as required. Modifications to the NCHEMS accounting system, tape library system, and refinements to parts of the HEF50 system are examples of the former while development of new QUIZ programs to generate customized reports for Information Services are examples of the latter.

Last year it was determined that only minimal efforts to enhance existing software should be made until a more appropriate approach to the storage of NCHEMS data collection could be implemented or until it was determined if NCHEMS would be acquiring a new computer. NCHEMS currently owns a Hewlett Packard 3000, Series III, which HP will no longer be supporting after February 1990. This year one of the computer center staff members thoroughly studied NCHEMS data holdings and their various uses (present and future) and developed a plan for alternative data storage formats and for implementing those formats. If a new plan is implemented, it will result in significant savings not only in terms of system resources and costs but also in terms of programmer and user time and effort. The end results will be a data collection which is much more accessible to users in a much more 'user-friendly' manner.